

Assemblyman
PAUL KORETZ
Forty-second Assembly District



proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks

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**Contact: Teresa Stark – (916)319-2042
cell (916)212-3986**

Koretz Lauds Passage of Marriage Equality Legislation

(Sacramento) – The California State Legislature tonight passed AB 849 (Leno), The Religious Freedom and Civil Marriage Protection Act, sending the bill to the desk of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Assemblymember Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) is a joint author of the bill and spoke in support during a final debate on the Assembly floor.

“Marriage law protections are generally not for the wedding day, the honeymoon, or the happily ever after. It is when things go horribly wrong in death, divorce, and serious illness that civil marriage protections become so vital to spouses and children,” said Assemblyman Koretz.

AB 849 repeals a provision in the California Family Code passed in 1977 that limits marriage to opposite sex couples. Last week the California Senate became the first state legislative body in the United States to vote in support of marriage equality for gay and lesbian couples when it passed AB 849. Tonight, the bill went to the Assembly for a concurrence vote and passed with exactly the 41 votes necessary. A similar bill also authored by Assemblymember Mark Leno (D- San Francisco) had failed passage in the Assembly last June. The outcome of tonight’s vote was a cliff hanger right up until the final vote on the Assembly floor with several legislators struggling with the decision up until the final vote was cast.

In the floor debate Koretz stressed the hardships faced by same sex couples and their children. “For lesbian and gay families the marriage status quo perpetrates cruel injustices that few Californians support. Children are taken across state lines in custody disputes leaving gay parents with no legal recourse. Elderly people with limited incomes are denied pension and death benefits because they were never permitted to marry their life-long spouse. Young children are denied child support and left to the meager benefits of our social safety net.

“There is no attack on marriage in America. There is only a rare opportunity to correct long standing injustices and to deliver the promise that all people are created equal and are entitled to equal protection under the law,” concluded Koretz. A majority of his Assembly colleagues agreed.

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